TOWN
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HURCH

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Renewal at the Roots

THOMAS ALFRED TRIPP

• Religion persists because man exists in a never-ending atmosphere of uncertainty and frustration. The unexplained and unknown mysteries of life and death create in man a great sense of inner need which is to be met only by spiritual security drawn from an adjustment to and identity with ultimates and absolutes.

Timeless and unyielding forces of nature—flood, drought, hurricane, famine, plague—bring travail, not only to the body but to the soul. The human spirit is tested by the catastrophic forces of man-made tragedy of war, revolution, economic depression and crime.

The significance and duration of the short span of human life midst the frowning forces in history create man's everlasting question. His personal defeat and humiliation demand not mere explanation but spiritual security, certainty and serenity.

In other words, the stupendous natural and social forces of an inscrutable world reveal to man his own insufficiency, thus creating his demand for God.

The Church at the Crossroads

Herein lies the fundamental nature of the divine character of the ecumenical church. Thus, is prescribed the "awe-ful" enormity of the task facing the man-made social institution of religion—the church at the crossroads.

The rural church, understood in the full purview of humanity's tragic dilemma, is ultimately more than that which it at first appears; namely, the most numerous and potent among social organizations in farm and village communities. It is, indeed, no less than the nearest material approximation of the ecumenical church and man's hope of cosmic peace.

Littleness, factional bitterness and tedious techniques which are often symptoms of weakness in the harassed institutional expressions of religion in the small community pale into insignificance when the real ecumenical nature and meaning of the rural church are held in perspective. Even the successes of unique forms in rural churchmanship may be of fading importance when compared to the obligation of meeting man's ordeal of earthly existence.

Objectives

Our American rural church program strives, therefore, to help the town and country parish to be the Church, a goal to which it can never fully attain but one toward which it may always travel.

First, we seek a ministry which truly presents the gospel and a church which yearns for strength for the building of a more adequate faith in a world of doubt. The need is for a fellowship which desires not only spiritual comfort but vigorous battle midst the stark realities of history. Our program is oriented to the deeper meanings of the church's ministry.

How the minister responds to efforts which support the deepest significance of his calling may be intimated by one illustration. In the various agricultural college short-courses and other in-service training schools for rural pastors sponsored by the Committee on Town and Country, the interpretation of the Christian message has a central place. Every year a rural churchman is invited to join the faculty of each in-service training school. The selection of this man is a matter of earnest concern to the responsible officer in the state university or other sponsoring institution. His assignment is to interpret the Christian message, lead the pastors in the search for an enriched personal faith and help the ministers adapt parish methods to Christian purposes in rural life.

In connection with the excellent and practical scientific courses on the social and economic meanings of rural culture and community, town and country pastors always hasten to seek the implications in terms of Christian religion and parish work.

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Frequently, they organize special out-of-class sessions for worship and theological discussion. At least one state agricultural college short-course group of rural pastors conducts an annual ecumenical communion service with representatives of a dozen denominations participating under the leadership of one of their number. While the rural minister is ultimately practical, he always responds to that which has the deepest significance in his high calling.

Task of Christian Education

Second, our rural program is directed toward helping the churches in teaching the young. Transmitting the Christian faith to childhood and youth is, next to building a leadership capable of teaching that faith, our most important work.

The weakness of the Sunday schools in many small country and village churches, which are often poorly equipped for religious education, is a matter of chief concern. More than half of our Sunday school-age pupils are in rural and village populations; nearly two-thirds live in country and village parish areas. If Christian education in the rural community fails, where will the church stand in the next generation?

There is no doubt that our rural churches are interested in the work of developing intelligent Christian youth. Their response to the attempts to adapt religious education programs to rural church needs clearly indicates this fact. The efforts intended to develop rural approaches to Christian education are never in want of interest from the churches and ministers.

Recently, the Committee on Town and Country, in cooperation with the International Council of Religious Education, participated in a grass-roots experiment in teacher education for small rural churches. This leadership school was conducted in a country church in Indiana by representatives of Protestant home missions and Christian education agencies. The rural adaptations for religious education are still unclear but progress was made toward teaching our Christian message to the young in town and country.

Evangelistic Challenge

Finally, our entire program stems from the primary aim of rural evangelism. Farmers, especially those in sparsely-populated regions, are the most neglected of any group. In many rural villages it is often necessary to accept the local saying, "This is not a church town." In some predominantly rural states of the Northwest, less than one-fifth of the people belong to any church. In all parts of the nation great numbers of people in the immediate hinterlands of villages and cities are without any religious ministry. In consequence of these tragic facts, denominational town and country departments are working together in the Committee on Town and Country in supporting programs to explore the best means of evangelism for churches in rural areas.

For example, in preparation for the 1949 National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country and the 1950 Congress on Home Missions, the Committee on Town and Country is making an intensive study of rural problem areas and groups. Each denominational rural department has accepted responsibility for a research assignment on one of these areas of evangelistic need. They will report back to the Committee on the results. It is expected that a study of carefully transcribed records, made by working groups in many states, will eventually result in certain important evangelistic adaptations to particular situations in which our rural ministry is carried on.

Rural people must be won to Christ. There are methods which will successfully work among them. Young people must be prepared to become competent truth-bearers for the time to come. For, first and last, our message must be intensified and kept clear that it may bring salvation from the confusions and contradictions of human existence and may lead to a great renewal of conviction and hope to the rural churches upon which rests the responsibility for Christian faith and action in these difficult but potentially recreative days.

Sermon on The Soil

• The Reverend A. K. Marney of the First Methodist Church in De Leon, Tex., recently preached a sermon on the soil and man's obligation to use it properly.

He introduced something new. He delivered his sermon with rostrum flanked with field plants that have become important to the local soil conservation program.

Prominently displayed were hairy vetch and Dixie Wonderpeas which have attained popularity as winter cover and soil-improving crops in the Upper Leon Soil Conservation District, as well as elsewhere in the sandy peanut-producing lands of the Cross Timbers. There, too, were green wheat and rye, usually planted with vetch to keep it upright until seed harvest time.

"Pastors must be deeply concerned," the Reverend Marney told his congregation, "when so many of them in the Methodist Church are supplying pastorates that can barely pay their way because the soil about them has been carelessly used. No great civilization can be maintained unless its members give protection to that which God has created."

—*Soil Conservation*, U.S.D.A.

The Peru Plan

ROBERT B. THOMAS

Our story begins in 1937 when o young laymen, one a member of Methodist Church and the other member of the Presbyterian Church Peru, N. Y., were playing tennis the community courts. They fell talking about their churches and reed that one strong Protestant urch in the village could better ve the people than two smaller, aker ones. Then and there they dged themselves to talk the mat- over among the people of their pective churches. As a result, a mmittee was appointed and ar- les of federation were drawn up d adopted.

The federated church functioned one church under the name of mmunity Church and was gov- ned by these articles of federation til the new corporation was rmed in 1944. At that time these ticles became the basis of the arter and the by-laws of the new ganization.

Common Practice

During the early years of our fed- ation, a common practice of fed- ated churches was followed, name- , the two church buildings were ed alternately for periods of six onths for worship in each build- g, and the other facilities were ed jointly for educational and so- al purposes. Neither building one was adequate to the needs of e federated church.

While the federated church had own spiritually as well as numer- ally since its inception five years revious, we had not yet reached e place where we could proceed to lan for more adequate facilities ntil we first determined who would old title to the real property. It as thought unlikely that Meth- dists would contribute funds to uild a Presbyterian building and lso unlikely that Presbyterians ould contribute towards a Meth- dist building.

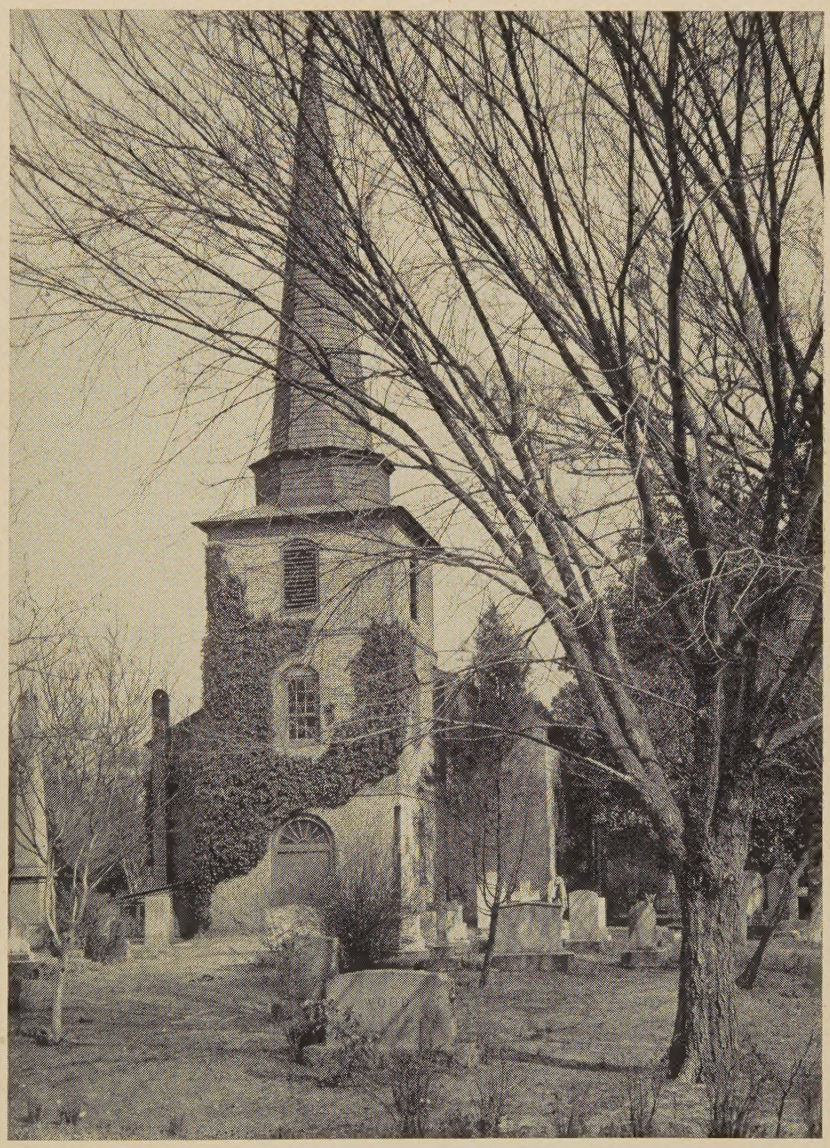
Thus the only solution seemed to e in a new building that could be ointly owned and controlled. At no time in our planning was there any thought or desire of becoming an independent community church with no denominational affiliation.

Father Time

As if to aid in the accomplishment of this sentiment, "Father Time" seemed to step in and take a hand. After the Palm Sunday service in 1943, the building then being used for worship was discovered to be showing signs of collapse. We immediately transferred our worship services to the other church. Investigation by the trustees and consultation and investigation by an architect finally resulted in the building being declared unsafe for public use.

With condemnation came the loss of a large portion of our religious education facilities and the rooms used for social affairs, such as church family suppers, entertainments, and recreational programs. Now something had to be done to provide more adequate facilities for our federated church and an effort was made in earnest.

At a meeting of the official board



St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Old Chowan, N. C.—erected in 1736.

A. Devaney, Inc., N. Y.

there was considerable discussion of what could be done. The minister was authorized to appoint a committee of investigation. In the fall a meeting of the two boards of trustees appointed a committee with power to sell either parsonage or manse when the price set upon either by their respective trustees could be secured.

A prospective buyer was found for the Presbyterian manse. This meant that the minister's family must be moved into the former Methodist parsonage, which thus became the Community Church parsonage.

At last, in November, 1944, all seemed in readiness for presentation of the petitions to the Supreme Court of the State of New York. There was, however, one further legal problem that must be cleared. The Presbyterian Church seeking to merge with the Methodist Church in Peru had been organized and chartered as the First Congregational Church in the town of Peru in 1826. It had soon thereafter been taken under the care of the Champlain Presbytery and had in fact functioned for over one hundred years as a Presbyterian Church.

We therefore decided to serve notice upon the Congregational organization in this state in order to avoid any future claims by it to the property given by the Presbyterian Church to the Community Church of Peru, New York, Incorporated. Application was made to the Supreme Court of the State of New York by written petitions for approval of the merger. A hearing was held before the Supreme Court Judge in the presence of witnesses representing both churches, the minister, and others who were invited to be present. Facts showing the propriety and desirability of the merger were presented to the court.

The petitions were granted, and when on December 19, 1944, they were duly filed with the order of approval the Community Church of Peru, New York, Incorporated, came into being.

On January 2, 1945 the trustees of the new church met at the call of the minister and were duly organized. They appointed a committee to draw up suitable by-laws under which the new church was to operate. These new by-laws, after careful study, were adopted at a special meeting called for that purpose on June 3, 1945.

Closer Unity

Thus did we of the Peru Community Church work out the problem of closer unity between the two Protestant churches of our village. The end towards which we have been working now seems a bit nearer. We have employed a competent church architect and he has studied our needs and drawn up plans for an adequate building to meet the increasing needs of our growing church and program.

When that great day comes that a real unity among the followers of Christ can be achieved on a national scale, we feel that the forward-looking Protestants of the village of Peru will be credited with having done their part in order to help hasten that day.

We commend to other federated churches a similar effort on their part to help bring to pass the realization of Jesus' prayer "that they all may be one," and we hope that this account may be of service to them in their efforts.

City Lights and Restful Darkness

• "Our background of experience largely determines the impressions made on passing over a city at night in an airplane. The streets are marked out by long rows of lights, while the business areas are brightened by the neon signs and floodlighted buildings and signs. The lights are on because there are people working, seeking varied recreation, and some just wrecking creation. One gets similar impressions lying on a hospital bed in the lonely hours of the night. The glow of city lights on the sky persists until the morning hours.

"What a different impression one gets when the plane passes over little towns and villages. Only a light here and there. The houses are huddled together in the dark, under the open sky like little chicks snuggled under the mother hen's wings. A sense of peace and security pervades. All is well. No need to try to cheat the darkness with man-made light. Folks may just turn out the lights and go to rest."

—*The Party Line*, a publication on the Rural Church, Evangelical and Reformed Church

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Home Missions Congress

• Preliminary plans to convene a Home Missions Congress in Columbus, Ohio, January 24-27, 1950, have been announced by the Home Missions Council of North America. The event will be the first of its kind in twenty years.

A "Statement of Purpose," issued by the leaders of the twenty-three major Protestant denominations affiliated with the Council, calls on mission forces to utilize the coming Congress as a means for launching an attack on "the economic despair and spiritual futility" of modern life. "The intent is to develop a sound strategy of home missions for the next decade," the statement reads, "and to launch a great forward movement for the fuller Christianization of America."

"Home Missions for a Christian World" has been selected for the Congress theme. The Congress will deal with mission work among minority groups—agricultural migrants, American Indians, Negroes, and southern sharecroppers— and such controversial issues as human rights, secularism and the influence of militarism will be considered. A special highlight of the gathering will be a mass meeting where outstanding public figures will speak on human rights issues.

Delegates to the Congress will consist of field missionaries, mission executives, ministers and lay leaders of local churches, government officials, educators and social workers. Provision is being made for a youth delegation, with a view of stimulating increased interest in missionary work.

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Cooperative National Services for Rural Churches

• Probably two out of three of the local churches in the constituency of the Committee on Town & Country are located in communities with less than 2,500 population, those classified as rural by the Bureau of the Census. These churches have, however, possibly only about one-third of the total church members. Thus there are numerous small churches in rural communities. Because of population trends, the rural churches send many people into the city churches.

Three Councils Cooperate

For almost forty years, cooperative national programs on behalf of the rural churches have been organized by the Home Missions Council. Federal Council services also began early in the Council's history, were discontinued for some years, and then in 1930 there was begun one of the first of the intercouncil agencies. The Committee on Town and Country of the Home Missions Council was then recognized by the Federal Council as its channel of operation. In 1943, the International Council of Religious Education became one of the constituting agencies of the Committee. Thus three councils now cooperate with one another in administering these programs.

The Committee on Town and Country has as its general purpose to encourage cooperation among the denominational agencies that render services on behalf of the rural churches. Some of these denominational agencies now have responsibility for assisting local churches in places having up to 5,000 people, and one, in places having up to 10,000 population. Thus the term "town and country" sometimes refers to rural communities as defined by the Census, and sometimes is used to embrace centers of population up to 10,000.

Program of Denominations

The denominational services for churches in small communities are divided into two phases: 1. Boards of home missions administer grants in aid to churches. 2. Denominational agencies render services to improve the administration and program of the churches. These two types may overlap.

Interdenominational programs grow out of denominational interests. The Committee on Town and Country thus renders certain common services for all, as follows:

Common Interests

In-Service training for ministers and lay leaders in town and country churches was one of the pioneering activities. Prior to World War I, the Committee had already encouraged the organization of short training schools for the purpose of offering courses emphasizing tested methods of rural church work. At present there are many such in-service centers carried on by educational institutions. The schools are all organized and conducted locally.

Once a year a National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country is held in order to bring together those most concerned with rural church improvement. As many as 1,000 persons have come together to exchange experiences and to make cooperative plans. Commissions of the Convocation meet for intensive study of practically every aspect of the local church program.

Closely linked with the annual Convocation is the periodical, TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH, a journal mainly of methods for those carrying on local church programs. Most articles are written by people at work in rural communities. The purposes of TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH are: To encourage cooperation among rural churches; to improve the administration and program of the rural church; to contribute to a Christian philosophy of rural life. TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH is published at 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., at $1.00 a year.

Rural Life Sunday observance is

promoted on the fifth Sunday after Easter, which is the historic Rogation Sunday that has been in the Calendar of the church year since the Fifth Century. Four times a year the early Christian church commended to God the fruits of the earth. An annual order of service for use in many denominations is published. Suggestions of ways of observance are circulated. Sometimes city churches observe Rural Life Sunday, too.

A renewed emphasis on Harvest Festivals in churches, in addition to the national Thanksgiving observance, is recommended to all churches—urban and rural—by the Committee. It has been found appropriate for churches on Fifth Avenue and Broadway in New York City to hold Harvest Festivals. Hence it would appear to be possible for all the churches in the cities, towns and open country to do so. An annual order of service is issued. Harvest Festivals are conducted any time from the first week of August through November.

The Committee has encouraged study of the rural church situation. It has maintained many contacts with the United States Department of Agriculture, the state colleges of agriculture, the farm cooperatives and the general farm organizations. It has encouraged church people to know the social agencies at work in rural communities.

The Committee believes that state and county councils of churches are important in meeting the needs of rural churches and encourages, whenever possible, the organization of town and country committees in these councils.

The Committee is formulating a series of policy statements. Those already approved are: "Man's Relation to the Land," "Comity Principles," and "A Commitment of Advance." Several others are in process. All are eventually to be combined in one document.

Interdependence of Rural and Urban Churches

Finally, the Committee on Town and Country assists those working in the general interests of the churches in extending their resources to the rural churches. The rural churches are not interested only in rural communities. They, too, are a part of the world-wide church. They are affected by the great issues of war and peace, by great economic trends, by social crises.

Thus the Committee has carried on its work on the theory that the rural churches should become aware of the great common interests of the churches; that it is good for a country minister to have some awareness of the situation of the urban churches and communities; that it is good for city-church people to reciprocate and be aware of the rural church. In short, rural and urban churches are interdependent; they need each other; they have an opportunity to contribute to one another.

—B.Y.L.

The Churches in Missionary Areas

• Protestants in mission areas have increased over 200 per cent in the past 23 years, a report issued by the International Missionary Council, New York, reveals. The survey, covering 120 countries and island groups outside the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and Europe, showed that the number of Protestants increased from 6,517,697 in 1925 to 25,341,283 in 1948.

At the same time, the report said that Roman Catholics in the same areas now number 130,135,533, and that there are 11,595,803 Eastern Orthodox church members.

Numerically, Protestants showed the greatest gains in South Africa and India-Pakistan, where over the 23-year period they increased from 714,013 to 5,467,281 and from 580,212 to 4,100,224 in the respective countries.

In Latin America, the largest gains were reported in Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico. In these countries the increases were from 69,527 to 1,657,524 in Brazil, from 3,350 to 259,956 in Argentina, and from 31,138 to 265,148 in Mexico.

According to the report, the entire Protestant missionary staff now numbers 192,987. This included 25,989 ordained ministers, 128,715 laymen and 38,285 women. Ordained ministers from foreign countries numbered 8,883 as compared to 17,106 nationals.

Countries with the largest number of mission agencies and churches were South Africa, with 82 mission groups and denominations; India-Pakistan with 101 plus 37 theological seminaries and 79 Bible schools; and China with 81 mission groups plus 50 theological seminaries and 160 Bible schools.

The total number of worship places in the areas surveyed was 141,169.

The only country to show a loss in the Protestant population was Turkey, where Protestants declined from 15,823 in 1925 to 2,900 in 1948. Other countries in the Near East all showed increases, including Syria and Lebanon, where Protestants went from 3,735 in 1925 to 21,527 in 1948. During the same period, Palestine and Transjordan registered an increase from 3,136 to 16,115, Arabia from 7 to 52, Egypt from 41,000 to 163,190, and the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan from 244 to 19,442.

In the Far East Korea showed an increase from 201,063 members to 743,773; Manchuria from 245 to 54,938; and China from 594,086 to 1,404,178.

The data are published in *The World Christian Handbook,* prepared by E. J. Bingle of London, published by the World Dominion Press. In the U. S. A., the book is distributed by the Friendship Press, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, at $7.50 a copy.

Your Harvest Festival

• If you have overlooked ordering *An Order of Service for a Harvest Festival* for this year, you may still secure copies from your denominational board or from the office of the Committee on Town and Country, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., at the following rates: Single copies, 5c each; 100 copies $1.00; 250 copies, $2.05. Carriage extra on quantity orders.

DR. MARK A. DAWBER, retiring co-executive secretary of the Home Missions Council, —a man of many talents—completes wood carving of Da Vinci's "Last Supper" for the Long Island church he serves as pastor.

Planning for the day when he uld retire from administrative ks with the Home Missions Coun- , Dr. Dawber has been serving pastor of the People's Church—a mmunity church in Long Beach, ng Island. Some months ago, the rish decided they must have a w altar. It was ordered from a mmercial firm specializing in rved wood and plans were made dedicate the altar at Easter-time. few weeks before that time, it was und they were destined to be dis- pointed: the firm advised they uld not deliver the altar for sev- al months.

When Mark Dawber heard that e altar would not arrive for months was determined his parishioners ould not be disappointed. He told em he would build them an altar, d as he later told the story, "got e horse-laugh." But what they dn't know was that Mark Dawber as a wood-carver and sculptor in is native England. He learned as a y under the tutelage of his father, hn Dawber, a carver and cabinet- aker, and some of Mark's artistic eations in wood may be seen in nglish churches including the Dur- am and Chester cathedrals.

"I planned to build a plain altar and get from England the carving of Da Vinci's "Last Supper" which I had made many years ago. I knew it had come into the possession of a friend and thought he would relinquish it. Much to my surprise he said he wanted to keep it. 'Now I am in the soup,' I said to myself. I hadn't done any carving in 45 years but still had all my carving tools—sixty of them. I set up a bench in the garage at my home and went to work. I needed a special kind of wood—Italian limewood—and fortunately found a piece in New York."

Easter was approaching and there were hours of painstaking work to be done. Only the evenings were free. Working from after dinner until past midnight, Dr. Dawber finished the carving in seven days.

Dr. Dawber plans to devote his attention to the pastorate and doing other things he has long planned. Few men have had such a varied career. After demonstrating his skill as a wood-carver and sculptor, Mark Dawber became a church organist and choirmaster at Marthall, Cheshire, England. He has a summer home at Norwell, near Scituate, Mass. Tables and chairs, a grandfather's clock and other furniture that fills the house testify to his skill with tools.

Farm Transformed Into College

• At Marlboro, Vt., an old farm of 400 acres has been transformed into a liberal arts college as a result of the dream and energy of one man, Walter Hendricks, who left the Illinois Institute of Technology to start a new college.

"It is doubtful if anything as novel as this project has taken place in higher education in recent years," wrote Benjamin Fine in the *New York Times* concerning Marlboro College.

Robert Frost, a friend of Mr. Hendricks, is a trustee. The college was established on a shoe-string—no endowment, no large gifts. Three thousand dollars was paid down on an $11,000 farm—a Brattleboro bank took a mortgage for the rest.

There are no "departments" at Marlboro College. There is no caste system among the faculty. There is a "community of learners." The college is organized like a New England Town Meeting.

All around the College in a small community, various organizations are helping to keep it going. A Ladies' Aid raised $100.; the Bennington College girls and the Marlboro College boys joined in a concert that netted $1,000.

Senator Flanders of Vermont gave the first commencement address in 1949. There are 100 students. The plan is to have 200 eventually, no more.

Quebec Community

In this place named after St. James
I come to learn about the aims
Of this good people on this land—
A spirit I would understand.

The farm, the home, the family
Welded in close community,
Produce, create, and in the fires
Of worship the whole life aspires.

—*Rusticus*

Community Councils—A Guide to Successful Organization

ROBERT A. POLSON

What is a Community Council?

• A community council is a body of responsible citizens representing the organizations, agencies and major interests of the community. It is open to every community group on a non-profit, non-partisan, voluntary basis and organized so it is representative of both the farm and village interests of the locality. A typical council has a membership which is sixty percent organization and agency officers, twenty percent professional men and women, and twenty percent outstanding local citizens not included in the previous two categories who are elected by the council as members-at-large.

The Purpose of the Council

A council provides a clearing house to aid local leaders. It functions to call together representative leaders to plan action on community-wide problems and to delegate the execution of these plans to the appropriate organizations. It creates a cooperative community team of otherwise independently operating agencies. It helps avoid waste effort and encourages orderly and efficient promotion of the community's work. A council may advise organizations and individuals advocating certain projects when asked or it may organize community-wide committees to carry on special tasks such as educational campaigns.

A council can act as a local planning group and can effectively function as the agency to bring special advisers and leaders to the community. The major functions of a council are to coordinate, to plan, to inform and to act in the interest of the total community.

Who Should Start a Council?

Any responsible citizen who feels the real need may well take the initiative in advocating a community council.

How to Organize a Council

1. Talk up the idea among the responsible community leaders who might be included in a community council if one were formed. If three or four community leaders favor the plan, enlarge the group. Select key individuals and explain the idea to them. It will probably be necessary to have several meetings of these leaders.

2. When the need for a council has been aroused, call a meeting of interested individuals, representative organization leaders, officials and professional leaders to explain the idea and its local potentialities. If possible, have a well-informed guest speaker present to explain the council plan and how it operated in other communities.

3. Have the citizens who attend this meeting carry the information back to their organizations and agencies and thoroughly discuss the plan. Ask for a decision on whether or not the organization favors the establishment of a council.

4. Hold a second meeting. Call for an expression of interest in establishing a council from the organization representatives. If there is reasonable interest, elect officers and formally create a council. It would be well to provide for an executive committee, including the officers, to guide the activities of the council. This same group should prepare a very simple constitution and by-laws in case they are desired.

Who Should be Invited to Participate?

1. Two delegates from each significant organization in the community. The most influential member and a ranking officer should be the delegates.

2. Public officials—mayor of the village, supervisor of the township, representative of the school board.

3. Community-minded professional men—school principal, teachers, ministers, doctors, the newspaper editor.

4. Most important of all, the dependable year-in-and-year-out community-spirited men and women.

A Few Hints

1. Make the council representative of the entire community area.

2. Invite the public to community council meetings.

3. Delegate community work to established organizations whenever possible. Reserve for the council itself only those projects for which there is no established appropriate sponsorship.

4. Council work should be done chiefly through committees. Quarterly meetings of the council are usually adequate.

—From *Extension Publication 1707-4, New York State College of Agriculture at Cornell University*

The Rural Church and Community Agencies

• "While the church is a great motivator of the more abundant life for all people, it needs to recognize its relation to community agencies and correlate its program with all of them, so that religion may permeate the total life of the community," writes L. B. George, pastor of the Charlotte Larger Parish, Charlotte, Tenn., in an article published recently in *Shepherds,* Nashville, Tenn. The author describes a successful series of "church night" services, held in the Charlotte Larger Parish, which have resulted in the "development of appreciation of the efforts of the leaders of community agencies and a widening vision on the part of church members concerning the value and function of the work."

In the same issue of this publication, E. Hampton Barnette, pastor of the Methodist Church in London, Ky., sets forth the rural church's need for simple orders of service which are varied to meet the needs of the people.

The editor of *Shepherds,* believ- that many rural pastors have ved the problem of an adequate ship service for their churches, ites "brief articles, letters, sugges- ns, and comments concerning this tter—something that, passed on, l be helpful to rural pastors and rches." Please send them to the v. George H. Jones, 1908 Grand enue, Nashville 4, Tenn.

Little Country Church

Scattered along the roadsides of nerica are thousands of little ntry churches where the people rural communities have for gen- tions worshipped God.

Here the people come to sing and y and listen, and thus renew ir spiritual strength. These lit- churches have helped to build e faith and character of America. ey have taught the people of the ral communities the simple truths religion and the comfort and sat- action of a life of faith.

Whether it be in the quiet rural eas or in the crowded outskirts of e cities, the church is an indis- nsable factor in building a strong, ppy, and useful life.

—From an advertisement in *The Milwaukee Journal,* sponsored by 18 corpora- tions

Last Call!

The sixth annual National Con- cation on the Church in Town d Country will be held in Lincoln, ebraska, November 8-10, 1949. We pe to greet you there.

Such speakers as Val Peterson, overnor of Nebraska, Douglas En- ninger, U. S. Department of Agri- lture, Frank W. Peck, Farm Foun- ation, and Mark A. Dawber, Home issions Council, are scheduled to ddress the Convocation.

A report of the Convocation will e published. Tentative plans are r it to appear in the February is- e of TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH.

Raiffeisen's Brotherhood Credit

BENSON Y. LANDIS

• About a hundred years ago Frederick William Raiffeisen, a devout Lutheran layman, organized the first cooperative credit association among farmers in Germany, out of which the numerous credit unions in the United States have evolved. Raiffeisen felt that he was performing a Christian ministry when he organized credit associations. It appears that he first used the term "brotherhood credit" when referring to the services of the organizations in which he was interested.

Raiffeisen was bold enough to say that the technique encouraged economic reconstruction, popular education, and moral regeneration. Raiffeisen was a civil servant and a mayor of several municipalities. The purpose of his effort was primarily humanitarian. He tried to make of every one of the societies a center where mutual trust and mutual aid were inspired. And, unlike other pioneers in the same effort, he made this aim "a cardinal principle."

The First Organization

The first credit organization seems to have been formed among farmers near Flammersfeld in 1849. In 1847 Raiffeisen had organized an association which purchased wheat and potatoes for use as seed. In 1846 he had started at Weyerbusch an association for purchasing food and another for baking and selling bread at low cost to low-income families. His first experiment was thus started only two years after the successful founding of the cooperative store on Toad Lane in Rochdale, out of which sprung the many consumers' cooperatives of the world.

In 1902, a statue of Raiffeisen was unveiled before his home. The Crown Prince of Germany and many representatives of the nations of Europe were present. He was revered in Germany as a patron saint of agriculture.

Worker Rather Than Student

Raiffeisen's biographers say he had few talents for public speaking, yet his earnestness made strong impressions on his audiences. A condition of semi-blindness prevented him from reading. In the words of Myron T. Herrick, who was a student of rural credits in Europe and also once Ambassador of the United States to France, Raiffeisen "was a worker rather than a student." He seems to have brought forth his tech-

niques without reference to the organizations that were being created in England and other nations at the same time.

Like other men of his day, Raiffeisen chose a "life motto" from the Bible. His was: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me." As he went about the country he travelled third class on the railroads and lived at the hotels of the poor, so that he might both know the people and stretch his travel account.

More Effective Than Sermons

Many Protestant ministers and Roman Catholic priests "acknowledged that his work for cooperation had more moral effect on the peasantry than all their sermons and ministrations"—again according to the distinguished Ambassador to France.

In 1912, Rev. C. O. Gill, a secretary of the young Federal Council of Churches, went to Europe to study cooperative agricultural credit institutions. Among many other comments Mr. Gill remarked of these institutions: "The rapid expansion and magnitude of these organizations are not more impressive than their social effects." They had "a most marked effect on the promotion of thrift." They had developed "responsibility among individuals." "Neighbors who were enemies became friends." "Many men made great sacrifices" for cooperative credit associations. "Many agricultural societies impressed the investigator as Christian institutions quite as much as did the churches. . . ."

Raiffeisen's life was "harsh and rigorous." He was "cranky, half-blind, poor and chronically sick." Only the wise intervention of his daughter Amelia and several friends at appropriate times saved the great enterprise in which he was engaged.

The first little groups were formed by fortunate persons partly with the motive of alleviating the suffering of the poor. They were gatherings of benevolent and somewhat paternalistic people who wished to help their unfortunate brethren. The organizations were for the relief of the poor, but those who benefited did not participate responsibly in the affairs of the organizations.

Trial and Error

At Flammersfeld, for example, some sixty well-to-do persons joined the first cooperative credit society. Most of them probably joined because Raiffeisen, the mayor, had asked them to do so. There was famine at the time. Many farmers were in want. Raiffeisen believed that "unlimited liability" on the part of the members of the association was the best way to create a lasting organization, and he insisted upon the adoption of this method. Because the original members made themselves liable for all obligations incurred, they, in turn, had the right to decide who might join in the future and who might receive loans.

In 1854, Raiffeisen began at Heddesdorf a second association. But troubles came early to both societies. The persons who had signed up to become members would not render personal services and would not take part responsibly after the first blush of enthusiasm had faded. Raiffeisen promptly sensed that he had relied too heavily on the motive of the relief of low-income farmers and not enough on the motives of self-help and mutual aid.

Raiffeisen Borrows

Raiffeisen then borrowed from a contemporary pioneer named Schulze-Delitasch. A new organization was formed at Heddesdorf in 1864 with the sole object of receiving deposits from and making loans to members living in the locality. Another society at Anhausen began not only to make loans but also to purchase fertilizer, seed and oil-cake for its members. This function of cooperative purchasing was eventually added by Raiffeisen to all of the credit associations, and they became the main features of rural cooperative credit organizations in Germany. To the end, Raiffeisen strove to persuade both wealthy and poor to become participants in the local associations.

By 1869 Raiffeisen decided to give his entire time to promoting the *rural* cooperative credit movement. Progress came slowly, but by the time of Raiffeisen's death in 1888 there were 425 associations. By 1894 the movement was extensive. By 1912 there was one agricultural cooperative association for every 3,000 rural inhabitants and one for every 3,300 acres of farm land. Two-thirds of these associations were credit societies, but not all were inspired or organized by Raiffeisen.

The Larger Vision

Although the Schulze-Delitasch type of cooperative credit society also was widely organized in the cities of Germany and in other European nations, the leaders of the American credit union movement—which is largely urban—now say, in the words of Mary Jean McGrath in *The Bridge,* organ of the Credit Union National Association:

> "It is to Raiffeisen that we owe the greater debt, for it was he who had the larger vision, who set up the ideals of cooperative credit as practical brotherhood which we know today in the credit union movement."

At Madison, Wisconsin, the headquarters of C.U.N.A. is named Raiffeisen House.

There are now about 11,700 credit unions in the United States and Canada, which receive deposits from and make loans to their members, who repay them in small systematic installments. In 1921, there were only 379. A Roman Catholic journalist, Alphonse Desjardins, was the prime mover in Canada. In the U.S.A., Edward A. Filene, a Boston merchant, pushed credit unions here after having been sold on the idea when he observed cooperative credit societies in the course of travel in rural India. (These are interesting events in the history of ideas.)

Credit Unions Within Local Churches

About 575 credit unions have been organized from among the members of local churches in the United States and Canada. Of these about 450 are in Roman Catholic

ishes, and about 90 in Protestant urches, the remainder being variously classified. The credit union is one type of cooperative that is nerally recommended for organtion among the members of the urch. Most American credit ions are formed from among the ployees of an industrial plant. e commercial banks and the manrs of industry generally look with or upon the credit union movent.

stimony

'You join in order to share." "The dit union discovers talent within church and develops personal." "The credit union apparently ought some people back into the urch." "The credit union opens an entirely new field of personal unseling." "The credit union ilds interracial fellowship." "Credunions rescue members from loan arks." "The credit union helped e church by refinancing the parnage." "A way whereby we may ar one another's burdens." "A rt of Christian stewardship." hese are all comments culled from ports and from correspondence ith ministers and laymen in local urches who have credit unions nong their members.

The Church and Rural Health

The Gospel of our Lord has alays been good news to people in ysical distress and the church, itlf, has an implicit interest in ealth. As long as we call children to our churches for Christian edution, it is our business to give hem adequate heat, light, ventilaon, and sanitary facilities.

For the church is concerned with dividual personality as Jesus was oncerned. Poor health and handiaps destroy wholesome living. The hurch knows that levels and standrds of living, social give and take, r isolation and availability of specialized aid often mean the differnce between good or ill in human ife. Every member of the church s dependent upon these conditions n some way for the development of is personality.

Rural Pastor's Contribution

As the rural pastor visits and works and prays in his pastoral relationships he finds people who are heavily laden with the weight of disease and ill health. These people need outside help along the way. It is only natural that they should turn for assistance to the minister for many have no other trusted confidant and burden-sharer. Are the members of your church made aware of all the health services available to them in the community, county, and state?

The minister must come more and more to realize that "health is the exercise and enjoyment of the powers and functions of life as a whole." In rural areas, especially, where provisions for medical help are often inadequate, the minister has an important task of keeping himself posted on any new developments in the community where the backing of the church might result in a better rounded program of health care. What are other agencies—such as the school, clubs and unions—doing to promote better health in your community? What is the church's function in cooperating effectively with them? What use is made of the literature which the national church office sends for membership education?

In the Official Board meeting what provisions are made for active church participation in relief drives? What backing is given the Committee on Hospitals and Homes? Is the denominational hospital for which your local church has an important responsibility being kept from filling the place which it should because of being forced to operate "in the red" year after year? How is the general membership of the local church made aware of existing health needs?

Ministers are often puzzled about what parts of the Gospel to emphasize. What was Jesus' attitude toward health? His reference to being "made whole" implies that bodily illness and spiritual inadequacy cannot be separated.

—From *The Rural Church,* publication of Garrett Biblical Institute

From A Sunday School in Hiroshima

• A letter to the Sunday school children of America from the Sunday school children of Hiroshima, Japan, has been made public by Paul H. Vieth, when he returned from a year's work in Japan as religious education consultant to General MacArthur's staff. One of the atomic bombs was dropped on Hiroshima in 1945.

The letter, released through the International Council of Religious Education, read as follows:

"To the Sunday school children of America:

"To this day we have received many gifts and letters from our American friends. We, members of the Sunday school, were able to get back on our feet with your encouragement and sympathy.

"Our American friends and ourselves are all branches of the Vine, one body of Christ.

"We wish to continue this friendship forever. We have been able to rebuild our church school with your sympathy and prayer. Today is our joyful dedication day. We want to express our heartfelt gratitude."

FUMIO OHNO,
Nagaregawa Church School,
Hiroshima, Japan

Purposes of This Journal

The purposes of this Journal are:

A. To encourage cooperation among rural churches.

B. To improve the administration of the local church, this to include organization of the church, finance, religious education, community relationships, and the training of lay leadership.

C. To stimulate the development of a Christian philosophy of rural life, this to embrace ethical issues in agriculture, social reconstruction, and government programs; and the content of the minister's message.

Part of Larger Program

The Journal is an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program" that will encourage a national "rural church movement."

The Church in a Four-Church Parish

J. P. PENNINGTON

• The Smith family lives in Anah, Wis., the only open-country community in the Namekagon Parish. A worship service is available to the family three times each month—at 9:45 on the first and third Sunday mornings and at eight o'clock on the fourth Sunday evening. Sunday school is held at 10:45 A.M., from Easter through Christmas. Mrs. Smith is welcome to attend and take part in the Ladies' Aid Society meetings on the first Wednesday of each month.

Meetings known as "Family Night" are held once a month, except during the winter. These are devoted to unrehearsed programs, singing, reading, and, occasionally, stunts. Here the family may buy ice cream cones or coffee, if they wish. The Ladies' Aid sponsors the evening but does not attempt to make money. This community pays its own share of parish expenses—$500 for its share of the minister's salary, necessary funds for upkeep and repair of their own building, and a share of the upkeep of the conference-owned parsonage.

Alternating Sundays

The Jones family resides in Earl, a tiny village along a state highway. Their friends and neighbors live in the little settlement or to the south on various town roads. When the Jones family goes to church they must choose the second and fourth Sunday at eleven o'clock in the morning and the first Sunday evening in the month. Sunday school is available the year round at ten o'clock. Mrs. Jones may attend and participate in the Ladies' Aid Society meetings the second Wednesday of each month. It is customary for a joint public school and Sunday school program to be presented at Christmas time.

The Brown family, living in the village and township of Springbrook, have a choice of churches. In this little village they may attend the Catholic, the Episcopal or the Congregational Church. If they choose the Congregational Church for their fellowship they may attend two morning services and one evening service each month. In the morning they may attend the service at 9:45 on the second and fourth Sunday of the month, the evening service on the third Sunday. Mrs. Brown, if she goes to Ladies' Aid Society meetings, will go from house to house every other week on Friday afternoons. The family has a year-round Sunday school available at 10:45 each Sunday morning. This Sunday school has the largest Bible class of the four parish churches.

The Johnson family lives in the village of Trego. Their church is across the road from the Catholic Church. Their Sunday morning service is at eleven o'clock on the first and third Sundays of the month, and they have a year-round Sunday school available. Mrs. Johnson is welcomed at Aid meetings on the first Thursday of each month which are often held in the church kitchen.

Sharing Responsibility

The parsonage is located in Trego but it is owned by the conference so Trego people do not bear a larger burden for upkeep than any other. One pastor serves all four constituencies, following a Parish schedule for stated meetings, and he may travel 1,500 miles in a month. He does not attend Sunday schools except to look in on them four times a year. Transportation expense is ever and always a problem to be solved.

The fifth Sunday service has become something of a tradition. It was begun as a parish service with a visiting speaker, and no collection was taken. Later, during the war years, an offering was turned in for Europe's need. The families attending these parish meetings could expect to find some 80 to 120 souls attending from each church community, worshiping and sharing in the larger life of the church. The offerings at these meetings occasionally reached more than $40.

The Namekagon Parish is backed by the State Conference which has furnished at least $500 a year for the past two years. The light soil on the cut-over-cut-over land does not provide high incomes, and it is doubtful if these churches will ever become entirely self-supporting. The program is not as adequate as it could be for there is challenge in every direction for service and leadership. Yet it brings one face to face with the eternal problem of the rural church—how much money should be spent? There is, also, a challenge to those who would "follow the gleam." A rural minister doesn't get rich in worldly goods, but the field is replete with spiritual blessings.

The church in a four-church parish is a splendid school for growth in grace and favor with God and man. In the rural church, "it takes a lot of running to stay in one place."

4-H'ers Wire Church

• When the Farmers Electric Cooperative of Chillicothe, Mo., ran a new line seven miles southeast of Braymer, the Pleasant Hustlers' 4-H Club undertook a wiring project. Under the supervision of their club leader they wired the McBee Chapel Church served by the new co-op line. The church basement, incidentally, is the club meeting place and also serves as a well-equipped recreation hall for the community on Wednesday evenings.

—*Rural Electrification*

Mennonites Get Site for Mental Hospital

• A 167-acre farm near Mount Gretna, Pa., has been given to the Lancaster Mennonite Hospitals Association as the site for a mental hospital planned by the religious group. Mr. and Mrs. Graybill Landis, members of the Landis Valley Mennonite Church, gave the farm to their church.

—*Religious News Service*

Larger Parish in Pennsylvania

J. DAVIS ILLINGWORTH

The Presbytery of Erie (Presbyterian Church U.S.A.) is endeavoring to strengthen its rural churches. the sixty-six churches in the Erie sbytery, forty-one are located in al communities of 2,500 or less. e membership of these rural urches ranges from twelve to six ndred.

n order to understand the needs, portunities and problems of the al church, the Presbytery of Erie ed its Board of National Missions send a representative to survey rural field. Miss Alice Maloney ne and visited all the churches, d subsequently each rural church s sent a survey sheet to fill out and urn to the committee in charge.

From the information gathered m the survey sheet and her visition Miss Maloney prepared a dy of the rural churches in the esbytery which revealed many ts; namely:

1. The inadequacy of our program. The study revealed that aside m the morning worship service Sunday morning the rural urches very seldom touched the ople. Of the forty-one churches ly eight had any kind of a men's ganization; only five had any oup for young married couples; d only sixteen had young people's oups.

2. That Christian education and adership training is below average our rural churches. The study inted out that only five have any nd of week-day religious education; only eight have daily vacation ble schools; less than half send legates to young people's conferences; and only eight have preparary classes for church membership. ven more important is the fact that ly five of the churches have any nd of a training class for teachers.

The study also revealed a large mber of members not attending rvices, a large non-resident membership and small contributions to enevolent causes.

Because the study has brought us ce to face with the needs of our ral churches this résumé is written with the hope that other fields will find a similar survey helpful in strengthening their churches so that they can be more forceful instruments for the work of the Kingdom of God.

Our first step will be to strengthen the program of our rural churches through more adequate and specialized leadership. We hope to obtain this through the larger parish program and are now endeavoring to set up such a parish in the southern part of our Presbytery. We feel that these churches, when provided with adequate and specialized leadership, will be able to carry on a program that will better meet their needs. This will be the first larger parish in the Synod of Pennsylvania.

Franklin's Idea

• One of the many ideas of versatile Benjamin Franklin has now grown into a $16,000,000,000 industry, according to H. L. Kennicott, president of the National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies.

This is the total of insurance outstanding and underwritten by 1,800 farm mutuals on agricultural property in forty-one states. Mr. Franklin pioneered the mutual fire-insurance system by founding the country's oldest such company with the snappy name, "The Philadelphia Contributionship for the Insurance of Houses from Loss by Fire."

Nothing Stays Mailmen, Except Feeding of Birds

• Rural mail carriers may tarry along their rounds in winter with the full approval of the Post Office Department.

They may pause to feed the birds.

The department explained that RFD carriers volunteered every winter to take sacks of grain, provided by local bird lovers, along with their mail pouches. The carriers scatter the grain in snow-covered areas where the birds appear to be on short rations.

Our Kinship with the Earth

FRED D. WENTZEL

• In winter time the bare trees have the appearance of death. We might think they were as lifeless as stones if we had not observed other winters, if we were not aware that within a few months the sap will rise and the buds will swell and every tree will clothe itself again in living green.

The soil in garden and meadow and forest seems now to be nothing but inert clay. A visitor from another planet might easily be deceived into saying, "This frozen ground is a dead and uninteresting thing," but we who are earth-born know better. When spring comes, as it always does, life will awaken in the soil, the crocus will bloom in the garden, bluebells will rise in the meadow, trailing arbutus will enliven the woods with color and fragrance.

Of course, everyone admits that life is in the prancing horse, the leaping lamb, the singing oriole. How much life, and what kind of life, we cannot tell. In their own way these animals sometimes act as if they were wiser than the human beings who pride themselves on superior intelligence. Why does the young bobwhite run and hide beneath the grasses when he hears the voice of a man? Why does the song sparrow leave Ohio in the autumn and fly over a long, sure sky-way to warmer lands? Why does a dog mourn the death of his master? We guess at answers, but all our answers are nothing but guesses.

Living Reality

This we know with certainty—the earth which nurtures us and sustains us is full of life. If it were not a living reality, how could it give birth to the living tree, the living flower, the living man? We are moved by an ancient and dependable instinct when we call it "Mother Earth." Modern science brings more and more confirmation to the old religious insight that one life moves and runs and sings through all creation.

We, into whose nostrils God has

breathed the breath of life, belong to the living earth. When we are healthy in body and spirit, we feel at home with her. We know that the soil beneath our feet, the moving air about us, the bright stars above us are all our friends. They were made for us. We were made for them.

To those of us who are aware of this kinship, the earth seems good, and pleasant, and companionable. There is nothing in her sunny days or in her dark nights to make us afraid. Her moods, like our own, are calm today and stormy tomorrow, but she is always bountiful in her friendship and we can lean upon her trustfully, as a child leans upon his mother.

"How Manifold are Thy Works!"

Of all the friends and comrades we know, the earth is the most liberal. When we are hungry, she gives us food in abundance. When we are thirsty, she gives us the refreshing water of her ever-flowing springs. When we are cold, she heaps wood and coal upon our fires and gives us warmth. When we are sick, she pours upon us the healing rays of her sun, and offers us the marvelous medicines of the common ground on which we walk. When we are lonely, she gives us the song of her birds, the quiet of her forests, the majesty of her stars.

Season after season, we discover again the liberality of the earth, and our minds say *Amen* to the ancient song of the psalmist: "O Lord, thou visiteth the earth, and waterest it; thou makest it soft with showers. Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; the hills rejoice on every side; the pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered with grain, they shout for joy, they also sing."

Prayer

• For the beauty of the earth, the wonder of the sky, the assurance of the seasons, and for thy sustaining care we bring thee thanksgiving, O Lord our God. *Amen.*

—Marguerite Harmon Bro

The Untranslated

• There is not one of us but has a mind-power of which he hardly dreams. Touching a flower, we seem as if we were absorbing something of this dormant mind-power. It flows from the flower, like its odor.

The perfume of the flower cannot be written. The violet cannot be expressed in words, though it is material. There is no language, yet, to express the feeling which flows from the flower. From the touch of the greensward a feeling flows as if the great earth sent a mystic perfume—an immaterial influence—through the frame.

More of this influence: more and more; it cannot be translated, yet, but it can be felt. Some day it will be translated; it is like hovering on the verge of a great truth.

—Richard Jefferies, in *"The Old House at Coate."* (Harvard University Press)

Labor Standards—Urban and Rural

• A consideration of the labor standards of both city and country workers is presented in *Fair Labor Standards—Rural and Urban* by Clara A. Hardin in the Public Affairs News Service, Woman's Press, 600 Lexington Ave., New York 22, N. Y. (1949; 40 cents a copy.) There are discussions of principles underlying fair labor standards, the minimum wage in theory and practice, child labor legislation and the special problems of agricultural wage laborers.

The recent efforts to revise the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 are reviewed. "Agricultural wage laborers, afforded a certain amount of protection during the war, are now almost completely without adequate legal protection." The publication is one of the few that treat of both urban and rural industry under one cover.

God's Challenge to the Rural Church

EARL GORDON

• John Martin turned into the lane that led to his well-kept farm house. He was returning from a meeting at the church where half a dozen men had been called together to consider whether their little country church should be closed. The matter had not been fully decided that evening, and another meeting was to be held one week later to make the final decision.

Mr. Martin drove the car into the garage, and then turned toward the house. It was a beautiful starry night. As he looked up at the sky, these words flashed into his mind: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork." How true that was! He had learned much that he knew about God from the little Sunday school down the road. And now the church was to be closed!

The Problem

In the house, his wife Jane and the two older children were waiting for him. Arthur would be graduating next month from the consolidated high school at the county seat sixteen miles away. Mary was fifteen and a sophomore in the same school.

The three turned their eyes toward John as he entered. Each was waiting eagerly for him to speak. Mary couldn't wait to hear the verdict, and she hastily asked, "Dad, will we be able to keep the church open?"

"I do not know," replied her father falteringly. "We shall not know until next week. The elder was there, but he hadn't much to say that was very encouraging. He says there aren't enough ministers to fill the pulpits. The larger churches can pay the higher salaries and, therefore, will be supplied first. He talked as though our church was small and not very important."

As John and his wife Jane sat in the living room that evening, their minds were ill at ease. They thought of what it would mean if the old

rch down the road were closed. e nearest church then would be Newville, sixteen miles away. For n and his family, this would not sent such a great problem. His ily was small, and could be transted very comfortably in the famcar. But how about the Miller ily? Counting the children, there e ten in that family. They did have a car. The same situation true for the Smith and Henry ilies. In these three families ne, there would be twenty-five ple without a place of worship if home church were closed.

e Matter of Income

ohn had been brought suddenly the realization of the greatest blem of the rural church, that of ance. Consider the ten people, for mple, who live in the Miller ne. Their farm isn't very produc-e. It takes all of them to help in fields and with the chores of the n. Even so, they have a small ine. Last year it was about $2,000 pproximately $200 per person on ich to live. Under these condins, they were unable to contrib much to the support of the urch.

The presiding elder had told John t he could not guarantee a minr for less than $3,000 a year sal, plus a well-kept parsonage. At present time, the church has one ndred and twenty-five members. at represents only twenty families, about six members for each famincome. The total budget needed run the church will be about ooo. Each family must contribute re than $300 a year to operate the urch. This is quite a financial burn, especially when the families are y large.

It is true that rural families are ge, but since cities are not procing sufficient children to supply pulation needs, it is from these ge families in the rural communis that future leaders of industry, ucation, science and religion will entually come. More than ever bere, the rural community needs the bilizing force of religion and the urch.

United Action

The next few days were trying days for the Martin family. Some solution had to be worked out to solve the financial emergency in which the church was placed. Jane asked people for suggestions; John spent all his spare time trying to solve the problem; even Mary and Arthur talked the situation over with their teachers in high school. Everyone was sympathetic but admitted that the problem was too great for them to solve. However, each friend contributed a little toward the solution. By the end of the week, John had worked out a plan which he intended to present to the official board at the next meeting.

The meeting was scheduled for Sunday morning after Sunday school. An unnatural silence fell over the small body of people as the presiding elder rose to speak. Words did not flow freely from his lips as he said, "My good people, it is needless for me to announce the purpose of this meeting. Since Brother John Martin was appointed chairman of the committee, I will call upon him for the report."

All eyes followed John as he took his position in front of the small gathering. John paused for a moment and then began to speak: "During the past week, we visited eighteen homes. Twelve families pledged themselves to support the church's financial program, and to be loyal to its religious and educational work. All were agreed that they didn't want to live in a community that had no church.

"One man spoke of how the church building had served as a meeting place for extension meetings. Others recalled the educational programs, including movies, lectures and musicals, that had been held in the little country church. Still others mentioned the wholesome recreational program that the church had provided for the children and young people. And to most, the Sunday school and the worship services had brought inspiration and strength for the heavy tasks and burdensome problems that many of the people face. Of these twelve families, only two had been attending church anywhere. From the members of these families, 42 plan to join the church here. Others declared their intentions to join later. This will increase our membership from 125 to 167.

Giving Is Act of Worship

"Six families plan to grow one acre of farm crops. Whatever grows on this acre will be sold and the money turned over to the church. This plot of ground and the crop grown on it we plan to call the Lord's Acre.

"Three future Farmers of America have each pledged a pig from the spring litter to be fattened and sold, the proceeds to be turned over to the parsonage committee.

"The Adult Women's Bible Class has volunteered to clean, paint and paper the parsonage. It has also appointed a special committee to take care of the parsonage needs at future times."

Leaning forward, as if to give his body more support, John continued, "We now have twenty families as members of this church. Each family has pledged five per cent of its income towards the minister's salary. From this source we have pledges of over $2,000 for next year. This, my friends, is my report as chairman of the Church Finance Committee."

John walked to the rear of the chapel. When the presiding elder rose, he did not speak immediately but his smile of assurance indicated what his answer would be. Finally he spoke, "The Reverend Samuel E. Robinson will be your pastor for next year. He will deliver his first sermon two weeks from today."

When John closed his eyes that evening, he could not help repeating a prayer which he had learned in Sunday school long ago:

"Thank you, God, for country air,
For room to breathe, and everywhere
The smell of freshly upturned earth
Where wheat and corn will soon give birth;
The vast expanse of rolling plain,
The cows a-trudging up the lane,

The clover field, a mass of bloom,
Wafting round its rare perfume;
The new and shining milking pails,
The thriving shoats with curly tails.
Thank you, God, for making me
A farmer's son—and proud to be!"

—Reprinted from *The Fulton County News*, McConnellsburg, Pa.

Book Review

Rural Welfare Services. By Benson Y. Landis. Columbia University Press, New York. $3.00.

Dr. Benson Y. Landis, Managing Editor of this magazine, has written a very useful book to add to his long list of earlier rural writings. *Rural Welfare Services* is a book on social work adapted for rural people. It includes such important activities as the administration of state and federal public assistance, old age insurance, child welfare, public health, recreational services, social services of the churches and the like. The author has a fine sense of community orientation of rural programs and he advocates the cooperation of agencies. Every rural agency in the community will work to see that rural welfare services are made effective and there will be a sound sociological basis for these services if the point of view in this book is followed.

Rural churches and ministers will find this book a necessary tool. It not only describes rural social services of the churches in a special chapter but throughout it calls attention to the place of the rural church in the community coordination of social work and other programs. Rural ministers will find here a description of how rural social welfare is administered in their communities by government and other agencies. Much goes on around the church which the church leaders do not know in detail. Here is the book to make them informed on such matters.

—Thomas Alfred Tripp

A Community Life Conference

AARON H. RAPKING

• Recently, I shared in a week-end community life conference held at Neubert, six miles from Knoxville, Tenn.

As a part of the conference we had a guessing contest as to the number of families living in the community, the guesses ranging all the way from 100 to 325 families. Then a committee of five men counted the number of homes and reported at the evening meeting that there were 314 within the community boundary lines.

People often have very indefinite ideas as to the number of homes in the community. A lack of concern for the welfare of people and a love for them is one of the main reasons why so many churches are failing to fulfill their mission.

Another feature of the conference was a very interesting panel discussion in which representatives from the church, the school, the home, the Farm Bureau, the county health department, 4-H Club, Knoxville Tourist Bureau, East Tennessee Improvement Committee, the Knox County Judge, and the district Young Adult Fellowship shared. These leaders sat in the front of the church facing the audience and discussed ways of "Evaluating, Directing and Bringing About Change in Community Life."

It is high time that the church, school, government, and all agencies evaluate the changes that are taking place.

What will be the outcome if the only solution most of our leading statesmen have to suggest is to pile up the national debt? What are we doing to bring about a better and more Christian relationship between our churches and schools? How can we expect to make real progress if the school, the church, the government and the many other agencies tend to tear life to pieces?

Out here in the countryside we do not expect beans to grow where we sow oats nor do we expect corn to grow where we sow alfalfa. We are confident that whatsoever we sow (as families and nations) that shall we also reap. Some day—we hope and pray that it may be soon—sanity will again be abroad in the world and we will take orders from the great God in charge of the universe and not from Washington.

ATTENTION MINISTERS!
RURAL CHURCH CENTER
announces

Three schools for ministers in Town and Country for the winter and spring of 1950 as follows:

WINTER SCHOOL
January 17 to February 10, 1950

LATE WINTER SCHOOL
February 21 to March 17, 1950

SPRING SCHOOL
April 19 to May 4, 1950

For information and catalogue write

Rural Church Center
Green Lake, Wisconsin

Mississippi Rural Center

• The Town and Country Department of the Methodist Church reports that the Mississippi Rural Center at Lampton, which was opened a year ago, has been making rapid progress. This is truly a cooperative project, for the Division of Home Missions, through its Department of Negro Work, is providing the salary of one member of the staff; the state health department of Mississippi is supplying the part-time services of a nurse; and local people have contributed in various ways. Also, a number of rural schools have made pieces of furniture for the center in their manual training departments